



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 12, 2024

Sacramento Calls Target “Public Nuisance” for Calling Police Over Retail Theft

The city attorney for Sacramento warned the Target store located on Riverside Boulevard that it could face an “administrative” fine over its calls for police assistance to thwart retail thefts at its store. *The Sacramento Bee*, [reporting on the issue](#), said that the Target store was a “public nuisance.”

Target has three stores in Sacramento, and the three made a total of 375 calls for assistance in 2023, more than double the number from the year before (175), and more than four times the number from 2021 (87). *The Bee* reported that most calls did not result in the police taking a crime report, issuing a citation, or making an arrest.



Mike Mozart/Wikimedia Commons

Various excuses were offered for the lack of interest in low-level retail crime, including police staffing shortages and the California law that made such crimes misdemeanors unless the amount involved was \$950 or more.

Clark Kelso, a professor of law at University of the Pacific’s McGeorge School of Law, said “there is no question” that the city has every right to pursue a public nuisance charge against Target, adding that “if there’s no threats to any members of the public, if nobody is threatened by it, well, where’s the public harm?”

The Statistics

All law professor Kelso needs to do is check the retail theft — shoplifting — [stats available online](#) to see what the “public harm” actually is.

Retailers lost \$112 billion to retail theft across the country in 2023, with projections of that number increasing to \$150 billion in the next two years.

In California retailers lost nearly \$9 billion due to shoplifting in 2022, costing the state \$568 million in lost revenue.

In Capital One’s shoplifting report, Sacramento is eighth on its list of cities most negatively impacted by soaring retail crime.

But in California, apparently it’s the retail stores that are the nuisance, not the shoplifters.



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